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ABSTRACT

This document describes, in a narrative mode, a simulated public education campaign to stimulate cross-campus awareness of, and dialogue about, attitudes toward homosexuality. The campaign described begins with a letter to incoming freshmen, alerting them to the presence of gay and lesbian students and emphasizing the need for mutual respect and common decency. This is followed, during orientation, by a survey of student attitudes toward homosexuals. Next comes a series of public notices, overhead displays, and a kiosk, providing information and stimulating public debate about homosexual issues, all prepared by a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual support group. Many examples of student responses, both supportive and hostile, are provided. The campaign culminates with a Declaration of Support, delivered to all students, which called on the university to "promote learning, understanding, and acceptance of others' sexual orientation." Handouts from the simulation are included. (TE)

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"Lesbians / Gays: Helping A Campus Understand: Looking for New Attitudes"

Presentation and materials delivered at
NASPA National Conference
New Orleans March 1990
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Sponsored by NASPA
Gay / Lesbian / Bisexual Network

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FOREWORD

The University of Maine at Farmington is a typical small rural New England in-town campus. The 1900 regular full time students are nearly all from small Maine communities where churches play a central role. They hold generally conservative views and traditional values. Half live in conventional residence halls and 70 percent are women. The faculty is aging and highly tenured. The curriculum emphasizes arts and sciences, and has a strong teacher training tradition. In sum the effort you are about to experience is not taking place in a "hot bed" of liberalism.

OPENING

Good Morning! In ways that are different for each of us, lesbian and gay matters reach into our sensitivities to release emotions. Some of the sayings, written comments, music, and other material displayed may have touched you already. I want this program to reach inside you so that you might someday reach inside others. Allow yourself to be open. Try not to use your usual filtering devices; no one will know except you. Allow what is offered to seep into your soul.

To start please consider each of the following statements in your own personal way.

> How can I tell if someone is homosexual or heterosexual? You can't unless you ask.
>
> If you don't judge straight people before you get to know them; then why judge a homosexual before you get to know them? Why worry whether a person is heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual?
>
> "All five children were coming back home for Thanksgiving. On Thanksgiving day John asked me if I wouldn't like to walk to a favorite section of the beach. In the middle of the walk he stopped and told me he was gay. I didn't know what to say. Our

first reaction was that we hugged each other. I cried. I didn't know what to say. We didn't talk any more that weekend. I did send him a letter a week later saying he was always welcome at home and I love him very much."
- a father of a gay child in Portland, Maine

"It (being homosexual) is always with you. You're always afraid. You live two lives. A straight life and a gay life..."
- a well known Maine married man
What would it be like if you had to live this way?

"I am gay my wife is straight and we have been married 25 years. The love and understanding of this wonderful woman have kept me away from temptation. I know deep down, however, that if I could have been legally married to my first love, I would have had a glorious life in harmony with my true nature..."

"I went completely into shock...I was just so upset...over several years I grew to accept my son's homosexuality..."
- a woman from Brunswick who now lobbies for Gay Rights Legislation in Maine

"Mary hadn't grown up knowing she was a homosexual. She was attracted to boys and did a lot of dating. 'I had always had an attraction to women...' She succumbed to the subtle pressures from family and society and got married. 'I thought this is what I'm supposed to do. It'll work out, I'm sure.' The marriage dissolved in a year." Are you part of that family and social pressure? Why?

"So how could you be friends with a lesbian?"
"She's my friend because she's all the things I like in a friend," she responded calmly.
"She likes being a black woman; she has a demonstrated commitment to black and other third world people; she has a great sense of humor; and she's not fragile."

WHY

We should be working in support of this subgroup of the population. Why? We should lobby. Why? We should be concerned. Why? We should care about gays, lesbians, or bisexuals. Why?

"Why bother with a topic that causes trouble!"
- a student comment.

For one level of response I will paraphrase Robert Kennedy: "if one person's rights are denied, the rights of all are endangered." At a more personal level of response I reflect on the words and emotion that a student etched in me: "I tried. I dated boys. I did those things expected, but it was all a lie; I tried to change, but even with the pain I couldn't; it wasn't truthful. I couldn't live being untrue to who I was. It was a lie to be what others wanted me to be; even the church asks me to lie about who I am. Why? Where do I turn?" It is the struggle, the lament, the plea that I cannot escape. As educators we need to support the right to human respect, decency, free expression, civil rights for all, free expression of the self, and the sacredness of one's sexuality. Neither you nor I should have to defend our support of or concern for humanity, love, and compassion.

More recently we have been urged to support the value of pluralism or diversity. For me these two words include more than minorities and international students. If we endorse these concepts we need to educate others where any people are denied: rights, expression, to be, respect... Those that can speak have a moral responsibility to do so. In simple words from a student: "we must not be silenced" or more often heard "silence is death."

LETTER

Given we now have a reason to speak out, consider what you can do at any college. Let's use our imagination. You are going to be a new student here at Marriott University. We're going to travel through some of what you'll be faced with. It's summer and you are receiving orientation mail, lots of it. In August you get the following letter.

August, 1988

Dear New Student:

> There are gay and lesbian students at UMF... no different than anyone...are entitled to full expression of self...students have been less than tolerant of gay and lesbian students. I am concerned about that intolerance and hostility...
>
> Tolerance of individual differences is something we value at UMF...challenge your colleagues who denigrate the homosexual community.
>
> ...it is expected that students will respect each other and treat each other with common decency regardless of...sexual preference...This is a freedom to be valued and supported, and applied equally to all...

Why send this letter? We want to express that we value all people, that it's OK to talk about it; that it's part of our lives at UMF. The "it" refers to the avoided words gay, lesbian, bisexual, and homosexuality. What was the student reaction? They were surprised; it was a taboo topic in school. Some faculty thought it was good to see open candid thought; many were silent; others were unsure. The president was cautiously supportive. Other administrators asked: "is this really what we want to send to new students?" The gay & lesbian community said, "thank you; it's a nice start, but we've heard words before, and we see the word tolerance." Parents never said a word at any time even when they came to campus at the orientation a few days before school opened. Maybe they were afraid to use the words? The letter was just one of many sent during the course of the summer. It did not cause "a stir" or any "flap."

ORIENTATION

Not much was said during the summer while you were at home; your parents were uncomfortable with the topic. Now you've arrived on

campus for orientation just prior to the start of school. You're in a small group and you are asked to complete a survey on homophobia. Why have a survey? It is a follow-up to the letter, it gives permission to talk and think about it, and makes it clear we're serious about valuing each other. Take a few minutes and respond to these statements, half the survey.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. It is preferable to be heterosexual rather than homosexual	___	___	___	___	___
2. Homosexual behavior is immoral.	___	___	___	___	___
3. With therapy, homosexuals can become heterosexuals.	___	___	___	___	___
4. It is important to find out how to prevent homosexuality.	___	___	___	___	___
5. Homosexuality is not a sign of mental illness.	___	___	___	___	___
6. Homosexuals are interested in "converting" heterosexuals to their lifestyle.	___	___	___	___	___
7. Homosexuals will always stand up for each other regardless of the issue.	___	___	___	___	___
8. Homosexuals have unusually strong sex drives.	___	___	___	___	___
9. Homosexual relationships can be just as loving and caring as heterosexual relationships.	___	___	___	___	___
10. Homosexuals should be entitled to the same legal and financial benefits as heterosexuals.	___	___	___	___	___

I hope this helps you begin to understand some of your own feelings about the lesbian & gay matters. We must understand ourselves first before we can help others.

"...one cannot deny the humanity of another
without diminishing one's own..."
- James Baldwin

KIOSK

You got through orientation and even heard the words, gay, lesbian, bisexual, homosexual, but not much more has been said. Then, during the first full week of classes, you come through your campus crossroad, high traffic area. There's this big 12 foot long thin stand-alone bulletin board in the middle. Traffic is moving on both sides; The headlines are big and bold.

What's it like to be gay?
Homophobia: Why the big deal?
Lesbians & Gays in Maine.
We are everywhere: beyond Maine.

It has pictures and other sayings, like the example on the wall. We strive for an uncrowded and professional quality look. We call this a KIOSK. Some students are standing around mocking it; you think maybe their homophobia is showing. A few are taking notes; one says he's doing a class presentation.

This is our means of competing with news media, and TV advertising. All students see it; you can read headlines as you pass. It provides information, tries to dispel myths, expresses an institutional view and value, and challenges the status quo. Faculty and administration reaction has been limited, but mostly supportive. There are those who think we're promoting homosexuality. The high volume of student reaction is strongly negative and strongly positive. Nothing has been destroyed, but it's clear many don't like it under their noses. Thus, we move it around and it disappears for periods of time. They want a chance to express their opinions about the topic.

Some say we're jamming it down their throats. We get suggestions, build them in and try to work from positive side. Others suggest we need to broaden the closed mindedness. The last display was done by the gay, lesbian, bisexual (G/L/B) support group. Simply put, it was moving. This is the first time they have spoken, but it was still anonymous.

OVERHEADS

This kiosk disappeared after a few days and the dialogue among students lasted a few days longer. One student observation was: you raise it, attention is heightened, and dialogue is hot for a few days, then it's almost forgotten. How do you sustain dialogue overtime? This is a key question, and one we still wrestle with.

The following week you are walking through this same high traffic area and this message is reflected with an overhead projector on a big screen.

> "Is it moral to oppress anyone because of whom they love?"

This is a different media medium, but it uses the same underlying assumptions as the kiosk. You can read it as you pass. I watch faces and eyes - as they come down the hallway; they all look for it.

We use student suggestions and current events. Some complain about it but they've read it. One student suggestion was: "we want to interact with the message," especially when a question is asked.

> Texas Judge Eases Sentence For Killer of 2 Homosexuals: DALLAS, Dec. 16 -- A judge here has said he gave an 18-year old murderer a more lenient sentence than prosecutors had sought because the two victims were homosexual and, the judge... HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS? It angers me.
> - Bill Geller

So we put up a big pad of paper. What do people write? There's a

sample on the wall. They stop and read, especially at night. The next day we post responses again in a different spot. It's lively! People stand around and discuss the comments. Student responses to the judge's sentence are on the wall over there. We use this overhead tactic once a week. People were shocked at first by the crude comments that were aimed at the individuals putting up the material, and lacked any sensitivity to G/L/B community. After a few times students started to respond to each others' comments as well as the message. People like the interaction type message, except those that want us to "chill out."

The messages I put up to start this program and all appearing today have been used in some manner. Our desire is to touch inner sensitivities, and generate thinking, dialogue, and debate; that's what we're getting. We realize we can't control the nature of the dialogue; we can only stimulate it. We hope there are people out there that will carry the dialogue in a positive direction.

> "Studies indicate that children of gay people
> are no more likely to be homosexual than children
> of heterosexuals."

STUDENT VOICES

Well the people you are hanging out with want this to stop. They're tired of the topic, but they're still talking. It doesn't look like this effort is going to end; the tactics keep changing. Actually some students are supporting the effort.

During the next week you're in the dining area and here comes this administrator delivering 11-1/2 X 17 sheets of paper to everyone; much like what I'm doing now. What's this? Why is he handing this out in this fashion? These are unedited student voices; one is from a

lesbian. I ask students to write on a topic, but I don't tell them what to write. Obviously I'm careful who I ask. "Voices" comes out about three times a semester. When I hand it out personally, that is a statement. Since its distribution is not routine, people are curious and they read it. Our assumption is that students will listen to peers before administrators.

"Voices" is sent to faculty and staff. Do they read it? Without a doubt! Is it talked about? Most certainly. Faculty are now encouraging students and even sending me some student writing. This tactic generates few complaints. We're starting to hear: "you know these people are entitled to their rights, they don't deserve the discrimination." Among students there is broad support for cutting discrimination. But there is still "bashing."

BATHROOM

A week later you walk into the bathroom. On the inside of the stall doors is a printed message. It could be any of those previously shown or the following:

> "...The things that make all human beings love each other are not their biological equipment, but aspects of their personality which have nothing to do with gender..."

Some feel this is going too far. Others have liked some of the messages, and taken them. Because there are complaints we know people see them.

DECLARATION

About this point in the semester you're beginning to think some of these people that don't want this material up are probably threatened by it, but what and where is the threat. Then there's a three week

eruption. In the eighth week of the semester you get a letter in the mail from some homophobia committee; it has something titled "A Declaration of Support,"

> from the Declaration - "...as an institution of higher education we have a responsibility to promote learning, understanding, and acceptance of other's sexual orientation..."

which is in your packet in its entirety. You ignore it, but in a class one professor is ranting about it; in another there is a more neutral dialogue. At lunch you share the tale with some friends who had the same experience in a class or two. This seems to last the week. The following week the people supporting tnis declaration have a table in the high traffic area and are collecting signatures. Emotions have risen and memos are flying.

The issues are: (1) tolerance vs. acceptance; (2) can the CSAO advocate this position? By virtue of my CSAO position I speak for the college. Make sure of where your president is or don't be a front person. The formulators of the statement discussed these two words and purposely selected acceptance. No one wants to be just tolerated and gays and lesbians want to know whom they can really talk to. Many said you'd get more signatures if you use tolerance. More than signatures is wanted. The words of one student captured the sentiment expressed by many. "I'm against a homosexual's lifestyle, not the person" therefore, tolerance not acceptance which means to approve just like the president said.

What did the president say and what was the reaction? The president responded to try to cool things down.

> ...There is a difference between...defending the right of all people to be free from harassment and,... "accepting" their sexual orientations and lifestyles. ...Another definition of accepting is

> "give approval to." ...But we should also recognize that many of those who would earnestly defend this right [to be free of harassment] would nevertheless be unwilling to "give approval to" homosexuality. ...We should remember that to be tolerant is to not be universally accepting.
>
> I support the right of those who wish to sign the Declaration and of those who do not. ...I hope both groups will support the rights of all of us to be treated with respect.

The reliance on the dictionary definition of acceptance is fine, but others argue that we have come to use it differently; as in, "can't you accept me for who I am?" Tolerance says: 'I'll put up with you.'

Some were dismayed with the president's letter. Their sentiments are best captured by a lesbian who responded to the president's letter.

> "...In conclusion, your letter President, as I have experienced it and from what I have heard from some others, simply put a stamp of approval on the status quo. It promotes the view that sexual orientation is a matter of choice and it defends heterosexism..."

On the positive side by speaking to the issue, he gave legitimacy to discussion.

Most students seemed unsure about much of this debate. Some said the talk was good. A few passed around a couple letters. Here's an excerpt from one

> FROM: <u>STUDENT AGAINST GELLER HARASSMENT</u>
>
> RE: FORCE FEEDING MORALS
>
> In the recent weeks there has been a great stir, accompanied by reams of paper, over the plight of women and homosexuals on our fine campus. We feel that its time to consider the other side. The dime store sermons being handed out by Herr Geller and his minions in the Student Life Office. When you get right down to it, exactly whose lives, ideas, morals are we talking about anyway?

Letters like this actually helped the cause. We didn't give the satisfaction of a reply. The student senate condemned it.

How did the faculty react? One wrote the following:

> "...The UMF Faculty Senate strongly condemns the recent cowardly actions...attempting to foster hatred and fear while hiding behind the cloak of anonymity. ...we express our wholehearted support... to create a climate...where all people, regardless of sex or sexual orientation, are treated with decency and respect.

The faculty senate passed only the first sentence. Why not include the second sentence? The response was: the president already said it. "Why can't it be endorsed?" "No point." Enough personal thank you notes kept the committee going.

This was an incredible emotional experience for this campus. In hindsight we should have provided more discussion outlets to talk about tolerance and acceptance.

KIOSK INTERACTION

One thing we have learned is that students want to interact with the material. I showed an overhead that did this. The kiosk can do the same. On the wall is an example. Notice all the quotes and references to the Bible. I was moved one day when I saw a woman sitting on the floor searching her Bible for a quote. Whether I agree or not I enjoy seeing someone defend what they believe. Faculty say the interactive strategies are best. If you'd like to express yourself please use that sheet under "Expressions."

> "If people could be seduced into a sexual orientation, more homosexuals would have been seduced in heterosexuality."

IMPACT

What do I observe in and hear from all this? We haven't any quantitative measures, but lots of feedback. Two faculty came forward to describe the exciting though sobering conversation raised in their

classes by students. Some English 101 teachers have students write on the topic. None of these things happened before. As another faculty member said, "you've given permission to talk about it." We receive encouraging notes and unsigned quotes from the Bible. We are invited to classes. What feels like a fairly large group of faculty and staff are behind the scene supportive. In the words of one, "a number are very supportive, but afraid to stand." This suggests something about our campus environment.

The G/L/B support group has become more active and is providing valuable behind the scenes support. The occasional four or five attendees has moved to 16 and growing. It's still not safe to be out.

Students report dialogue in the dining room. RA's report it on their hall floors. Witness the volume of written reactions displayed in this room. Notice the student response on the last page of the handout. We hear students say we discussed that in class today. We get petitions of support. We challenge each other. We have frequent impromptu hallway debates about the topic. Some faculty are willing to talk about it and participate in study groups.

The staff are talking. Others are too. Can you talk to your clerical staff about sexual orientation, gays, lesbians, etc? In some areas we can. Two years ago our counselors (and me) referred to the G/L/B student support group as "that" or "it' or "your." We can even say the words with some ease now.

In all of this I hear a common point of stuckness: is one's sexuality a choice (preference) or not (orientation)? Some say that it is not scientifically proven that one is born gay or lesbian. These people may think one can make a choice and consider sexuality as a preference. Others are able to believe and accept what the G/L/B says

and that person's orientation. If you think preference, do you use tolerance and are you maybe looking for scientific proof to base your belief? If there were scientific proof for either position, would attitudes be any different? I'm going to leave those questions with you.

In sum it's part of the campus dialogue. We've forced the dialogue across the campus. Dialogue is an initial ingredient, if society's attitudes are to change. We have dialogue; we aim to sustain it. There is pressure to discuss process, not the topic. Don't fall for it. We listen for other processes, but we don't second guess or debate our tactics, we act. The "we" is a group of students, faculty and staff working to educate a campus. What I have presented here is possible because of this group.

Here are a few quotes, mostly from students. They are suggestive of the current state. The fact we have them means students are speaking.

"Heterosexuals are made to accept the homosexual lifestyle..."
Some do think we're jamming it down their throat.

"If the [CSAO] would mind his own business we wouldn't have a problem..."
In other words lets ignore the issue.

"I'm looking for more than tolerance..."
No one wants to be just tolerated.

"I'm concerned for the homosexuals on campus..."
There is compassion out there

"I can't help but think there is a lot [of discrimination] when I see comments written on the walls..."
Some students are aware and observant.

"It's gross. I don't like talking about it..."

Some don't want to face reality

"...people are thinking and talking..."

Some are encouraged.

"...it's a shame we have so many closed-minded students on our campus..."

Students see the narrow-mindedness in their peers.

"...it felt like intimidation...I was trying to be helpful..."

Some are trying but need help.

"I didn't know what to say or do..."

Some are coming forward and asking how can I?

"...I'm glad you're raising this..."

We hope this person is saying the same to peers.

"Take the hint people are getting sick of this."

To quote another student: "get it through your thick head students are sick of your stupid bulletins..." Some don't like it.

"...Keep it up...despite the comments..."

It's nice to have encouragement.

FINAL THOUGHTS

These are exciting times at UMF. Join the initiative in any way you can. If you do start something, don't let forces deter you or side track you; stand firm. If we can help, call even if it's to hear a supportive voice. Use any of this in any way you wish. Let me close with these few thoughts for you to dwell on.

> I like to feel supported. I like to be treated with human decency. I respect people who don't share my same views.
>
> I have a family. I teach children in school. I go to church. I am raising a child. I have neighbors. I work in a profession. I enjoy being friends with many others.

I like to be liked. I have fears. I value respect. I have feelings. I like to be appreciated.

Strong bonds between any two people involve love and care.

It is not important whether one is homosexual or bisexual or heterosexual. We are all people!

HANDOUTS

PROGRAM

Lesbian/Gays: Helping A Campus Understand
Looking For New Attitudes

WELCOME

TO

MARRIOTT UNIVERSITY

As you experience this simulated year on our campus vacillate between being a student and a Student Affairs professional. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is my self reflection? Where do I stand on this social issue?

2. What is my institution's position with regard to this social issue?

3. What is being done on my campus to address this social issue?

4. Will the activity cause me to talk to others?

5. Will attitudes be challenged by the activity?

6. Does the activity involve me at an emotional level?

THE ASSUMPTIONS

The inner sensitivities of the common ordinary silent majority of the student body needs to be reached daily if colleges are to help form a more respectful, open minded, compassionate, humanitarian and socially conscious citizenry that can deal with social issues. In the 1960's higher education suggested publicly that it could help resolve the nation's social problems. However, in 1989 The Chronical of Higher Education subscribers read about "the new racism", issues of sexism, epidemics of chlamydia, disregard of AIDS victims, presidents call for tolerance and human decency, orientation programs that focus on diversity, special courses on pluralism, and changes in harassment policies. Most of these are issues that current middle-manager-daily-decision makers faced as students in the 1960's and yet they appear either never to have learned or to have forgotten for they are doing the hiring, setting salaries, approving the advertising, interpreting policy and the like that perpetuate discrimination, intolerance, and disrespect.

As educators how can the student personnel profession raise awareness among all students and help them think about, discuss, and reflect with others on the major social issues faced by the society? How can we have an impact on student attitudes? If the assumption is that in the last 25 years the profession has attended to societal concerns then the profession has had little impact on shaping attitudes on social issues (ex. sexism, racism, homophobia); thus, there is little harm in trying something different.

Our current programming is no match for the television students watch or the popular magazines they thumb through or the song lyrics they listen to. Colleges need to create just as powerful a communication. Ones institution needs to not only permit but join the discussion of the issues and create a message that will have moral and value tones.

LESBIAN/GAYS: HELPING A CAMPUS UNDERSTAND:

LOOKING FOR NEW ATTITUDES

SOME STRATEGIES

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Prior to 1987-1988 we behaved as if all students were heterosexual. We conducted no surveys prior to starting. We have run on feedback and gut instinct. We do a lot of listening. We take risks.

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIES

- To get the attention of every student
- Initiate daily dialogue
- Challenge attitudes
- Purposely present a position reflecting values
- Force discussion across campus
- Dispel myths
- Present information
- Give license to talk about it
- To get at sensitivities and emotion

1987-1988

- A new counselor is hired and provides support for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals (G/L/B).
- No G/L/B's are out but they are individually making contact with the counselor.
- A closed G/L/B support group is started. Time and place of meetings not disclosed. Interested people come to the group through the new counselor.
- At RA training prior to start of second semester an afternoon workshop on G/L/B conducted by the new counselor with support from housing staff. Excellent discussion, but a minority felt the issue was "jammed down their throats."
- In the spring the new counselor and others convince The Women's Center to sponsor a study group focusing on G/L/B matters (for the following fall semester).

- People working with orientation decide G/L/B will be a topic of a summer mailing to all new students. Included is an attitude instrument for their own use.

- The Center for Human Development staff hold a staff workshop on G/L/B matters

1988-1989

- The CSAO outlines for all student personnel staff the general direction for the coming year. In this G/L/B matters are stressed as a social issue needing to be addressed.

- G/L/B matters are discussed at RA training.

- An open letter to the campus lists G/L/B as one of seven social issues and (1) urges endorsement of addressing these issues; (2) seeks volunteers who would like to work actively on any one of the social issues.

- An organizing group issues an invitation to the campus to join a group each Wednesday from 9-10 a.m. in studying and discussing G/L/B matters.

- The study group decides broad education of the campus is needed. The focal piece will be a Declaration of Support which they start to draft.

- A lesbian student, comes out in an article she writes for the school newspaper.

- Between semesters the CSAO sends a letter to all students stating that G/L/B matters are something we need to attend to.

- The CSAO leads the residence hall staff, including RA's, in the "Alternatives" game just prior to the start of the second semester.

- The Declaration of Support is distributed to the campus in early March. It is personally handed to students in high traffic areas and in the eating centers.

- A table is set up, manned by the writers of the declaration, to gather signatures of support.

- Hot discussion extends over a three week period; fueled by open letters from students, organizations, faculty, and the president.

- Two lesbians, supported by the librarian, create a library display of famous people who happen to be gay.

- In support of Maine civil rights legislation for G/L/B's a lesbian leads a petition drive.

- An AIDS patient, spends a week living in the residence halls, going to classes, eating in the dining center and informally talking with large groups of students. An unintended result was an open and candid discussion of the life of a gay.

- Cooper Thompson is scheduled to come - a man interested in ending homophobia - as a way to bring the year's efforts to a close (near the end of the semester). Unfortunately a late snow storm stops him.

- Throughout the year faculty and other personnel who express concern or treat G/L/B's inappropriately are politely confronted on a one to one basis.

1989-1990

- Summer orientation material on G/L/B used again but no attitude survey is included.

- Attitude survey done during orientation. Results shared with campus later in the semester.

- On a weekly basis messages designed to have people think about G/L/B matters are posted with overhead projection in high traffic areas.

- G/L/B students write personal feelings oriented articles for the tabloid "Student Voices" which appears once a month.

- Three times during the fall semester a major display on G/L/B mattters appears in a high traffic area.

- Gay Awareness Week is celebrated with a special display, place cards with messages on eating center tables, a week of special messages on the overhead.

- Faculty and staff are surveyed with the same instrument used at orientation. Results are compared to students and shared.

- The study group continues with every other week forums on topics such as "Homosexuality and the Church", "What About About Coming Out?"

- The student support group continues.

- The declaration statement and signatures are shared so new students will know where there is support.

- Students conduct a discrimination survey and discover students think the greatest discrimination is against homosexuals.

- Dialogue continues with the resisdence hall staff.

- English 101 classes have writing assignments with homosexuality topics.

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT

We, as members of the UMF community, believe that all faculty, staff and students should be treated with respect, be free from harassment and discrimination, and be extended equal human rights and privileges. More specifically, we are concerned that gay, lesbian, and bisexual people at UMF do not always enjoy the same human rights and privileges as do heterosexual people. As an institution of higher education, we have a responsibility to promote learning, understanding and acceptance of others' sexual orientation and lifestyles. We support the rights of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people to express their beliefs, values, and sexual orientation in their everyday lives.

Faculty, staff and students have experienced harassment. Harassment and intimidation undermine the basic human rights and values we, as a society, subscribe to. More specifically, harassment and intimidation serve to inhibit self-expression, forcing the gay and lesbian community into "the closet". This fear of self-expression contributes to a cycle of oppression by isolating gay and lesbian individuals from one another, and by creating a conspicuous lack of healthy role models for gay and lesbian youth. We propose to break this cycle by:

-- providing faculty, staff, and students with accurate information about issues and concerns of gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

-- promoting activities and dialogue throughout all areas of the UMF community in order to increase awareness, sensitivity and acceptance of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people.

We, the undersigned, choose to uphold the dignity of each other, choose to not only tolerate and accept, but respect and embrace the diversity among us. Making these choices is our obligation, our responsibility, our challenge. Join us in responding to this challenge.

DOES IT WORK?

Respect does not require agreement or endorsement of all beliefs or practices, but respect for human rights. We do not require anyone on the campus to change their beliefs - only to conduct themselves with decency.

UMF Professor
Doug Dunlap

By actions this week at UMF has the spirit of this thought been exhibited?

IN RESPONSE

A Student Wrote

Some people have not shown respect on this paper, but I think for the most part people who take the time to share their thoughts also have been respectful. But...have the actions shown respect? At a volleyball game, I heard two men put down and make very derogatory remarks about some students from another country. At a class, I listened to one women tell us how her daughter had been raped... At the gym, at the student center, in the cafeteria, I listened to people say cruel things (including "I wish they were all dead") about homosexuals. I don't care whose toes have been stepped on by these displays and "opinion papers", people are thinking, talking, and some are taking a good look at some of the views they had in the past and re-evaluating...an making changes. That's what education is all about.